

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 2, 2020

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Mr. President:

We are writing to you out of deep concern for our constituents that remain stuck on two cruise ships after nearly two weeks—the Zaandam and the Rotterdam. We ask for your personal help to ensure a rapid resolution to this unfortunate and disheartening situation.

As you know, passengers on the Zaandam were put on lockdown in their cabins nearly two weeks ago as some crew and passengers fell ill to suspicious flu-like symptoms. Unfortunately, some of have now died—with the cause confirmed as the coronavirus.

Having been blocked from docking by Latin American nations, the cruise ships' first challenge was securing permission to transit the Panama Canal. Thanks to high-level engagement by the State Department, the Panamanian government generously allowed these two ships through—despite clear risks to the brave canal staff that must board and guide ships through the canal.

However, with these two ships through the canal and with the physical and mental health of Americans on board continuing to deteriorate, the ability of these ships to dock remains uncertain. As such, we urge you to call on state, Coast Guard, and emergency officials to quickly facilitate a final docking for these ships at the nearest port of call in the United States. Americans and others on board these ships are not unlike those ashore—many well, a few sick, and some with symptoms. With fewer people on board than a small high school, these passengers and crew members are not likely to overwhelm any local American health systems. However, without a rapid and high-level intervention, we fear that those on the ships face the dire prospect of many more days confined to their rooms or potentially limited emergency medical care on board the ships—at great risk to their lives.

We urge you to quickly take strong action to secure safe and expeditious docking for the Zaandam and Rotterdam.

Respectfully,

Tom Malinowski
Member of Congress

Steve Chabot
Member of Congress

Gil Cisneros
Member of Congress

Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

Dean Phillips
Member of Congress

Lee Zeldin
Member of Congress

Abigail Spanberger
Member of Congress

Pete Stauber
Member of Congress

Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress

Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress